

# STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

*Updated 2024*



**CALVIN**  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY

# Calvin Theological Seminary Student Conduct Code

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## **A. Preamble**

As a community of disciples who belong –  
body and soul, in life and in death –  
to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ,  
Calvin Seminary will provide a safe, healthy learning environment  
for all of our students and their families.  
Calvin Seminary will support students in their formation for ministry.  
Students will live as mature believers with integrity in accordance with biblical standards.  
We will show hospitality and compassion to one another  
while avoiding behavior that undermines community  
or that violates civil law or professional ethics.  
We will hold one another accountable as we live and learn together,  
always seeking restoration and reconciliation in matters of offense.

## **B. Scope of Authority**

1. The Chief Academic Officer, working closely with the Dean of Students and the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services, has authority over all behaviors which would disrupt or obstruct the academic environment including academic dishonesty of any sort.

2. The Director of Student Housing has authority over all problems which involve seminary-owned housing or seminary-facilitated housing, including any leased housing.
3. The Dean of Students and the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services have authority over all problems concerning personal behavior.
4. Final administrative authority in these matters resides with the senior officers of Calvin Seminary (President Chief Academic Officer, and Chief Operating Officer), with the Calvin Seminary Board of Trustees handling all appeals of administrative decisions.

## **C. Jurisdiction of the Seminary Student Conduct Code**

The Calvin Seminary Student Conduct Code shall apply to conduct that affects the seminary community and/or the pursuit of its objectives, whether it occurs on seminary premises, at seminary sponsored activities, or off-campus. Each student shall be responsible for his/her conduct from the time of application for admission through the actual awarding of a degree, even though conduct may occur before classes begin or after classes end, as well as during the academic year and during periods between terms of actual enrollment (and even if their conduct is not discovered until after a degree is awarded).

## **D. Proscribed Conduct**

This code recognizes that Christians seek to live their lives out of the positive law of love in obedience to God's commandments. As a community that prepares students for Christian service, we expect students to exhibit integrity, honesty, and other behavior that is in keeping with a follower of Jesus Christ. As an institution of higher learning, we sometimes engage difficult, controversial, and potentially offensive issues. We strive to address these issues in ways that are respectful, appropriate, and give the least offense to others. As the seminary of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), we are guided by [the values and ethical standards of the CRCNA](#).

As the seminary of the Christian Reformed Church of North America, Calvin Theological Seminary exists to serve the Church by forming Christian leaders for biblically faithful and contextually effective ministry of the Word of God. As such, faithfulness to Scripture and the broader Reformed tradition are essential elements of a Seminary education.

The Christian Reformed Church believes that marriage is an institution created by God to be "a covenant relationship established by mutual vows between a man and a woman united by God."<sup>1</sup> The Church also believes that sexual activity between individuals of the same sex "is incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Scripture."<sup>2</sup>

As a Christian community within the Church, students at the Seminary are expected to strive to obey the Church's teaching in every area of their lives, including sexuality and marriage.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/position-statements/marriage](http://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/position-statements/marriage).

<sup>2</sup> [www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/position-statements/homosexuality](http://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/position-statements/homosexuality).

Students who demonstrate with their conduct that they are unwilling to live in a manner consistent with the stated beliefs of the Christian Reformed Church will be subject to corrective action up to and including dismissal from the Seminary. Same-sex attracted persons seeking to live by the Church's teachings are fully welcome at the Seminary.

Because our love is often feeble, fragmentary, and deficient, this code seeks to assist the community by proscribing the following conduct. This list is not exhaustive by any means, but is meant to illustrate the types of conduct which are not acceptable.

## **1. Acts of Dishonesty:**

Including but not limited to:

- a. Cheating, plagiarism (see [the Student Handbook](#)), inappropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI), or other forms of academic dishonesty.
- b. Furnishing false information to any seminary official, faculty member, or office.
- c. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any seminary document, record, or instrument of identification.

## **2. Acts of Inappropriate Behavior:**

- a. Physical, sexual, or verbal abuse, including harassment, assault, coercion, bullying, or other conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person. Abusive conduct is any conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive campus, educational, or working environment for another person. This includes unwanted, unwelcome, or inappropriate activities or comments.
- b. Biased, prejudiced, or discriminatory comments or activities related to sex, gender, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, or any other legally-protected category. This especially includes comments or activities that are disparaging, derogatory, or denigrating.
- c. Attempted or actual theft of or damage to any personal, private, or public property, on or off campus.
- d. Failure to comply with directions of college or seminary officials or law enforcement officers acting in performance of their duties and/or failure to identify oneself to these persons when requested to do so.
- e. Unauthorized possession, duplication, or use of keys or other access devices to any college or seminary premises or unauthorized entry to or use of college or seminary premises.
- f. Violation of any published seminary policy, rule, or regulation or of any federal, state, or local law.
- g. Disrupting or obstructing teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, or other seminary-based functions.

- h. Unlawful use, possession, purchase, distribution, sale, or manufacture of a controlled substance (including marijuana), designer drug, or drug paraphernalia.
- i. Unlawful possession, use, or distribution of alcohol on seminary property or as any part of seminary activities, and any type of intoxication on or off college or seminary property.
- j. Possession of firearms, explosives, weapons, or dangerous chemicals on seminary property.
- k. Inappropriate, disparaging, derogatory, profane, or obscene expressions, including speech and social media, which violate accepted standards of decency and Christian conduct or which defame others, including Calvin Seminary.
- l. Inappropriate or immodest dress or behavior.
- m. Sexual misconduct in its many forms. (See [the CRCNA website](#) for position statements.)
- n. Any unauthorized use of electronic or other devices to make an audio or video record of any person while on seminary premises without his/her prior knowledge, or without his/her effective consent when such a recording is likely to cause injury or distress. This includes, but is not limited to, surreptitiously taking pictures of another person in a gym, locker room, or restroom.
- o. Abuse of college or seminary computer technology and resources, including:
  - i. Unauthorized access to Seminary network files.
  - ii. Unauthorized access to Seminary database & business systems.
  - iii. Unauthorized use of another individual's ID card or passwords, or sharing your own.
  - iv. Use of technology and resources to interfere with the work of another student, faculty, or staff member.
  - v. Use of technology and resources to send obscene or abusive messages.
  - vi. Use of technology and resources to interfere with the normal operation of Calvin University or Calvin Seminary computer systems, including infecting the campus network with computer viruses or malware.
- p. The publication or posting of materials without the professor's consent is prohibited. Instructional materials on Calvin Seminary's Learning Management System are to be used solely for the purpose of the student's education in the degree program in which he/she is enrolled.

## **E. Problem Resolution**

### **General Guidance:**

We are a community of believers that shows hospitality and compassion to one another, holds one another accountable as we live and learn together, and always seeks restoration and reconciliation in matters of offense. Consequently, wherever possible we will seek resolution of conflict and conduct issues through dialogue and discussion with the parties involved, guided by the counsel of faculty and staff as appropriate.

If a student has an issue of conflict or conduct with a faculty or staff member, the student should follow [the Calvin Seminary Grievance Policy](#). If the conflict or conduct relates to sexual harassment, discrimination, abuse, or any other sexually-related issue, the student should follow the [Calvin Seminary Title IX policy and procedures](#).

## **1. Academic Problems**

If the problem is academic in nature, the faculty member or staff person who has a complaint concerning a student must first approach that student. If the problem is not resolved, then the student, faculty member, or staff person shall bring the problem to the attention of the Chief Academic Officer. The Chief Academic Officer, working closely with the Dean of Students and the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services, shall discuss the problem with all parties involved, assuring that the student(s) involved have full opportunity to tell their story; evaluate possible courses of action to resolve the issue; make a determination; and impose an appropriate sanction when necessary. (Section F.1. and F.2.).

In situations where there may be a conflict of interest, the Chief Academic Officer will take the matter to the Dean of Students or the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services to resolve the matter, following the same process.

## **2. Social/Moral Conduct Problems**

### **a. With a Student or Students:**

If the problem involves social or moral conduct with a particular student or students, a faculty or staff member who has a complaint must first approach that particular student or students with the complaint. If the matter cannot be resolved, it shall be brought to the Dean of Students or the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services, who may conduct an investigation, maintaining records throughout the process.

### **b. Among Students**

If the problem involves social or moral conduct or conflict among students, the students should ordinarily first seek to resolve the matter themselves. However, if one of the students feels threatened, unsafe, or for any other reason does not feel able to address the matter with the other student(s), he or she shall bring the matter to the Dean of Students or the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services, who may conduct an investigation, maintaining records throughout the process. If the matter involves sexual harassment, discrimination, abuse, threats, stalking, assault, and/or violence, the matter shall be brought to [a trained Title IX faculty/staff person](#), who will initiate the seminary's sexually-related grievance policy and procedures.

### **c. Procedure**

The Dean of Students or Dean of International Student and Scholar Services will assure that the student(s) involved have full opportunity to tell their story. The Dean of Students or Dean of International Student and Scholar Services will investigate the matter and make a determination, seeking resolution and reconciliation where possible, while imposing appropriate sanctions when necessary (Section F.1.).

In serious matters, where suspension or expulsion may be appropriate, the Dean of Students or Dean of International Student and Scholar Services will refer the matter to the Chief Academic Officer and the Chief Operating Officer.

In situations where there may be a conflict of interest, the Dean of Students or Dean of International Student and Scholar Services will bring the matter to the Chief Academic Officer to resolve the matter, following the same process.

### **3. Housing Problems**

If the problem involves housing with a particular student or students, the particular faculty or staff member who has a complaint must first approach that particular student or students with the complaint. If the problem is not resolved, or if a person other than a faculty or staff member has a complaint, then the student, faculty member, or staff person shall bring the problem to the attention of the Director of Student Housing. The Director of Student Housing, in collaboration with the Dean of Students and/or the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services as necessary, shall discuss the problem with all parties involved, assuring that the student(s) involved have full opportunity to tell their story; evaluate possible courses of action to resolve the issue; and make a determination, imposing appropriate sanctions when necessary. (Section F.1.)

## **F. Sanctions**

### **Social/Moral Misbehavior or Obstructive/Disruptive Behavior in the Seminary Community**

Disciplinary action will be taken in one or more of the following manners

1. *Admonition*- an oral statement to the student that she or he has violated or is violating institutional rules. Such admonition may come from the Dean of Students, the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services, the Chief Academic Officer, the Director of Student Housing, a professor, or a staff person.
2. *Warning*- a notice in writing to the student from the Dean of Students, the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services, the Chief Academic Officer, or the Director of Student Housing that the student has violated or is violating institutional regulations.

3. *Personal Probation*- a written reprimand from the Dean of Students, the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services, the Chief Academic Officer, or the Director of Student Housing for the violation of specified regulations, stating the reason for the probation. Probation will be for a designated period of time, with the warning that more severe disciplinary actions will be taken if the student violates any institutional regulations during the probationary period.
4. *Loss of Privileges*- when more severe disciplinary action is needed, certain privileges may be withdrawn from the student by the Dean of Students, the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services, the Chief Academic Officer, or the Director of Student Housing for a designated period of time.
5. *Suspension*- an action by the Chief Operating Officer or the Chief Academic Officer with the concurring advice of the Dean of Students, the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services, and/or Student Appeals Committee, if sought, whereby a student is separated from the seminary for a definite period of time. Conditions for readmission will be specified by Chief Operating Officer or the Chief Academic Officer with the concurring advice of the Dean of Students, the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services, and/or Student Appeals Committee, if sought.
6. *Expulsion*- permanent separation of the student from the seminary by action of the seminary Board of Trustees based upon the recommendation of the Chief Operating Officer or the Chief Academic Officer.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

1. Since Calvin Seminary views plagiarism as literary theft and academic dishonesty, the consequences of plagiarism are very serious. The policy on plagiarism is [here](#). A professor may decide to do one or more of the following:
  - a. require the student to rewrite the flawed assignment or to write a new assignment;
  - b. give a failing grade for the assignment; and/or
  - c. give a failing grade for the entire course.
2. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chief Academic Officer. More severe consequences—including expulsion from CTS—are given for extreme cases of plagiarism, for multiple offenses, or for lying about plagiarism.

### **Housing Problems**

The seminary may terminate any housing contract at any time for violation of any of the provisions outlined in the On-Campus Housing booklet.

The seminary may terminate any housing contract at any time for violation of seminary regulations or for any reason deemed sufficient by the seminary.



## Notification of Appeal Process

Any written sanction will include notice of the right of appeal to the Student Appeals Committee.

## G. Appeals

1. A decision involving a written sanction (Section F) may be appealed by the student(s) in writing to the Student Appeals Committee within ten (10) seminary business days of the decision. An appeal shall be limited to a review of the proceedings for one or more of the following purposes:
  - a. To determine whether the procedure was conducted fairly and in keeping with this Student Conduct Code, and whether the student(s) had a reasonable opportunity to prepare and present a response to the allegations.
  - b. To determine whether the decision was based on information which was sufficient to establish that a violation of the Student Conduct Code was more likely than not to have occurred.
  - c. To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate for the violation of the Student Conduct Code for which the student was found to be responsible.
  - d. To consider new information, sufficient to alter a decision, or other relevant facts not brought out in the investigation of the alleged violation(s).

2. Procedure for Appeals:

**Step One:** Within ten (10) seminary business days of the decision to be appealed, the student shall notify the Student Appeals Committee in writing of the decision being appealed and of the purpose of the appeal. (Section G.1.) The Student Appeals Committee shall consist of the Dean of Students or the Dean of International Student and Scholar Services who shall act as chairperson, two representatives from the Student Council, two faculty members, and one staff member.

**Step Two:** The Student Appeals Committee shall review the relevant material and make a decision. The Student Appeals Committee shall inform all involved parties of the decision in writing.

**Step Three:** If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the Student Appeals Committee, based on the criteria listed in G. 1. above, he/she shall notify the Chief Operating Officer of this appeal within ten (10) seminary business days. The Chief Operating Officer shall review the relevant material and make a decision. The Chief Operating Officer shall inform all involved parties of the decision in writing.

**Step Four:** Final appeal is to the seminary Board of Trustees, and its decision will be considered final.

3. Confidentiality and Records

Official records kept of all meetings, hearings, and deliberations will be held in strictest confidence in the Academic Office. All documentation and records will be safeguarded.

## **H. Interpretation and Revision**

1. Any question of interpretation or application of the Student Conduct Code shall be referred to the Chief Operating Officer or his or her designee for final determination.
2. This Student Conduct Code shall be reviewed every three years under the direction of the Chief Operating Officer.